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FARMERS' BULLETIN 1173
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**PLANS OF
RURAL
COMMUNITY
BUILDINGS**



A HOME without a house is possible but in no sense desirable, for a good house adds to a home a quality of "hominess" which nothing else can supply. In somewhat the same way, and under somewhat the same difficulties, a community can get along without a community house. A community can "live around" from church building to church building, from school building to school building, from hall to hall, and never experience the distinct pleasure of occupying a community house.

However, a good community house adds something to community life. The community idea, indeed, the very conception of "communityness," so to speak, pervades the mind of the community when it enjoys the use of a community building of its very own.

The community building movement enters the farming situation at a time most opportune. The social and economic life on farm, in farm neighborhood, and in village and small agricultural city is being organized on a community basis; and the great demand in connection with this social and economic development is for an adequate building program, good housing facilities, and expressive architecture. The country-life movement, moreover, which sums up modern thought on the life side of the farm, is a community movement in large part and will welcome the community house as a tangible symbol of rural social unity. And the development of the Farm Bureau, which sums up modern hope on the economic side of the farm, is at bottom a matter of community organization which will find a community home in a community house.

C. J. GALPIN.

Contribution from the Office of Farm Management and Farm Economics

H. C. TAYLOR, Chief

Washington, D. C.

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PLANS OF RURAL COMMUNITY BUILDINGS.

W. C. NASON, *Assistant in Rural Organization, under the Direction of*
C. J. GALPIN, *Economist.*

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THE growing popularity of the practice of erecting separate buildings for rural social-center work makes the question of plans for such buildings one of immediate interest. Department Bulletin 825, "Rural Community Buildings in the United States," treats of the general nature of community buildings, being illustrated by a few specific examples. In the following pages are presented the floor plans of a wide variety of community buildings now in actual use.

Before a community decides the question of erecting a building it should make a thorough study of the local situation. The study

NOTE.—Acknowledgment is due to the Bureau of Public Roads for valuable assistance rendered in the preparation of this bulletin.

should show that an actual need for a building is felt by the various organizations of a public nature and by the people themselves. It should demonstrate that the building can and should be maintained as a permanent institution.

After it has been decided to erect a building, numerous questions arise.

TYPE OF BUILDING.

The original study should not only determine the need of a community building but also the most desirable type. No two communities are alike, and each will desire to put up its own particular kind of building, just as every person builds his own type of house.

The size and type of the building depend upon the population of the community, the amount of money available, maintenance expenses, the uses to which it is to be put, future needs, and similar factors.

Population.—The building should be large enough to serve the present needs of every member of the community and every organization, regardless of party, creed, or class, no matter how far distant they may be, and should be located at a place naturally frequented by all members of the community.

Future needs.—If it does not seem practicable to provide in the beginning for future growth, the building should be so constructed that additions or other stories could later be constructed without detracting unnecessarily from the symmetry of the structure or the adequacy of the room arrangements.

Money available.—The amount of money that can be secured from a given community for a building can not be accurately estimated in advance. There may be two conflicting tendencies. One will come from the enthusiastic backers of the enterprise, who will fix an estimate higher than can be reached. The other will originate with those members of the community who are doubtful as to the success of movements for the common betterment or frugal in financing such enterprises. A middle course between these two extremes should be the aim.

Before an attempt is made to estimate the funds available, however, a well-directed campaign of enlightenment should be carried on throughout the surrounding country, with the object of making generally known the benefits to be derived from the erection of the building.

Maintenance expenses.—Before the size of the building is finally decided upon it should be made certain through careful study and an estimate of probable receipts and expenditures that the building can be permanently maintained.

Uses.—Every community will have its own particular uses for a building, and these can be determined only by the people themselves. It may be stated, however, that a standard community building should have as a minimum these accommodations:

1. An assembly room, perhaps with movable seats, that can be used as a meeting place for the people or for various organizations. With the seats removed the room will be available as a gymnasium, as a game room, as a dining room, or for fairs and exhibits.

2. A stage on which lectures, plays, and various entertainments can be given and which may have a screen for motion pictures.

3. A kitchen where food may be prepared.

4. A place where lunches, suppers, and banquets may be served.

The more advanced communities would need other accommodations. These should be carefully estimated in determining the size of the structure. Future growth should be taken into consideration.

ARCHITECTURE.

Permanency.—The type having been definitely decided upon, proper attention should be given to the advisability of building for the future. A permanent structure of durable materials is cheaper in the end than a temporary structure of light materials. Location, climate, and available building materials must be considered.

Serviceability.—Considerable initial expense and much time and energy in the future will be saved by carefully planning the arrangement of the different rooms, corridors, stairways, doors, kitchen conveniences, and toilet comforts. If expense is the chief consideration, much money may be saved by having one large room, with movable furniture, serve as an assembly hall, gymnasium, dance hall, and dining room. Service windows, swinging doors, or food elevators between dining room and kitchen make for convenience. Wide, gradually sloping stairways, numerous exits, outswinging doors, and assembly rooms confined to the first floor make for safety. A room arrangement facilitating proper supervision is both economic and convenient. Large folding doors sometimes make it possible to throw the whole floor into one large room. In the kitchen many steps can be saved by an economic arrangement of sink, cupboards, stoves, serving tables, etc. Much can be added to the utility of a building by attention to the proper rules for ventilation, heating, lighting, acoustics, and water supply. The serviceability of the building should apply to the needs of women as well as those of men, equal accommodations and conveniences being supplied.

Harmony.—An attempt should be made to have the design of the building harmonize with the designs of other public buildings in the

community. In sections of the country where there are no existing architectural standards or traditions an opportunity is afforded for initiating an approved type of architecture which may serve as an example for future buildings.

Design.—While serviceability should be, perhaps, the main consideration, beauty should in no wise be neglected. As the building is to be the center of expression of various arts, such as music and the drama, so the structure itself should be an example of good taste, dignified, pleasing to the eye, and appropriate. Overornateness, elaboration, and display should, however, be avoided.

THE SITE.

Location is second in importance only to the character of the building itself. No matter how architecturally pleasing a building may be, its effect is lost if it does not have the proper setting. Ugly or bare surroundings should be avoided. Nor should the building be obscured by taller structures closely surrounding it. It should be conveniently located with reference to those who would use the building most, bearing in mind the relative importance of the uses to which it may be put, and should be easy of access by road, car line, and other ways of approach. Incidentally, a generous site near the center of the neighborhood possesses other advantages not pertaining to the subject of this bulletin.

CONSTRUCTION.

The best is the cheapest in the end. The work should be in charge of a competent contractor, who should carefully follow specifications. Even in the case of a building constructed by voluntary labor, much time and valuable materials may be saved by expert supervision. Such work as the erection of the stage, the location of the auditorium, the construction of the bowling alleys and the swimming pool, proper heating, lighting, and ventilation, requires expert direction.

BUILDING COSTS.

It is quite impossible to give adequate estimates of the cost of erection of any particular building, the plan of which is shown in this bulletin. These costs are in no sense fixed, but are modified by such considerations as location, time of erection, climatic influences, amount of free labor available, availability of cheap building materials, fluctuating commodity prices, changing markets, etc. A reputable architect has estimated that a building which before the war cost \$2,500 would in 1919 cost \$3,747. Average increase of labor costs is estimated at 33 per cent, that of material 64 per cent, or an average of both of about 50 per cent.

TYPES OF BUILDINGS FOR WHICH PLANS ARE PRESENTED.

The plans presented in the following pages are those of actual buildings in successful operation. The houses are located in various parts of the country under different climatic conditions. They are of many different types, since each community has a certain object in mind and needs a building to meet specific conditions. The builder of a dwelling house often finds, after the house has been used, that it has certain defects that can later be corrected. Similarly, some of these communities, through use, have found that certain changes might improve their buildings. In a general way, however, they have proved admirably adapted to the purposes for which they were erected. It is hoped that those contemplating the erection of a community house may find, among the various plans presented, some that will be helpful to them in making a choice of plan, or perhaps complete plans that, with a few changes, either in appearance or with regard to convenience, may be adapted to the needs of the community. Such changes will usually be found desirable to meet local conditions or to keep abreast of improvement in design or equipment.

Classification.—In order to show the kinds of communities which have erected the various types of buildings, the communities are classified under the heads (1) Farming Community, (2) Farming and Village Community, (3) Farming and Town Community, and (4) Farming and Small City Community.

Under the first head are classed those buildings financed, controlled, or used by a community the industry of which is largely farming. Buildings in a village and supported by farming and village people are placed under the head, "Farming and Village." "Farming and Town" buildings are those in a group larger than a village, but still having large farming use and control. A building in which farmers have a very considerable interest, but which is also largely participated in by the people of a small city is classified as, "Farming and City."

FARMING COMMUNITY.

IMPROVEMENT CLUBHOUSE FEATURES.



FIG. 1.—Community house, Madison (Phoenix R. F. D.), Ariz.

A standard community house located six miles from a town, erected in 1917 by the Women's Improvement Club as a clubhouse and community center at a cost of \$5,650 obtained by means of entertainments, general subscription, and a loan. One story, red brick, asbestos roof, overhanging eaves, bungalow style, suitable for warm climate.

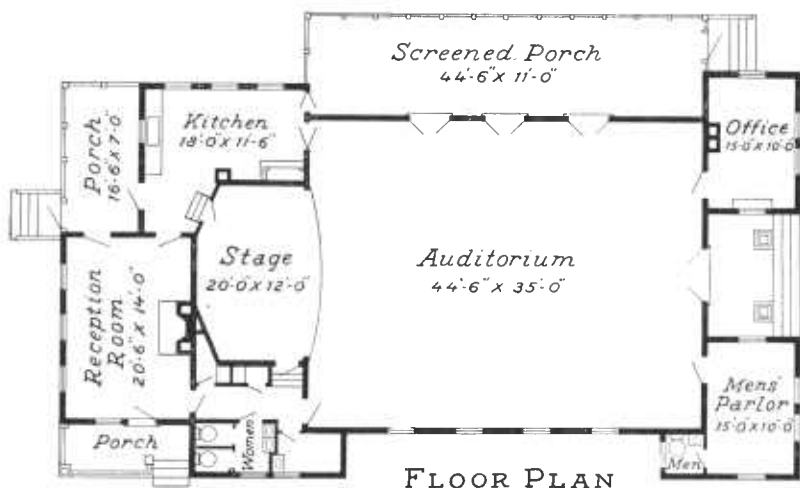


FIG. 2.—Floor plan of Madison building. (By courtesy of Burt McDonald, architect.)

TOWNSHIP-OWNED FEATURE.

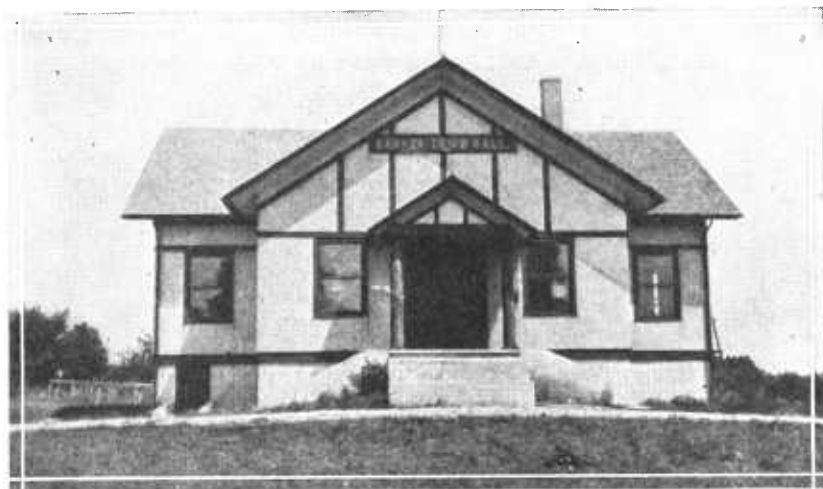


FIG. 3.—Community house at Como (Elkhorn R. F. D.), Wis.

Geneva Township building, located five miles from a town, erected in 1917 from township funds, at a cost of \$5,000. The stage being located at the side of the auditorium, all the audience is within easy hearing distance. Largely used by farmers' organizations.

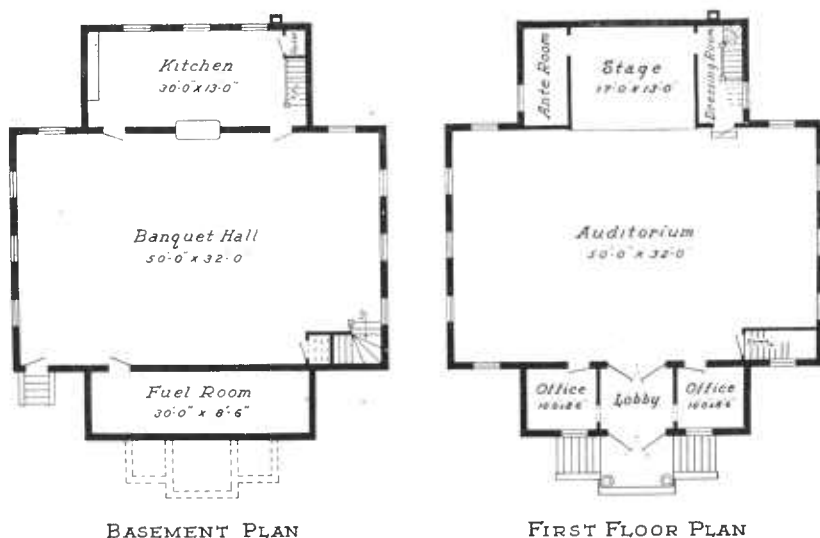


FIG. 4.—Plans of Como building.

GENERAL OR STANDARD COMMUNITY HOUSE FEATURES.



FIG. 5.—Community house at Gilead (Andover R. F. D.), Conn.

Erected in 1905 by the Hall Association through the issue of stock at \$25 per share. Cost, \$3,000 net. Colonial design.

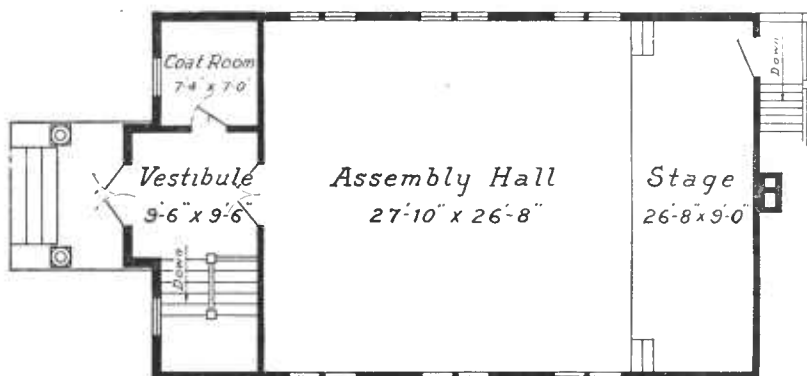


FIG. 6.—First floor plan of community house at Gilead.

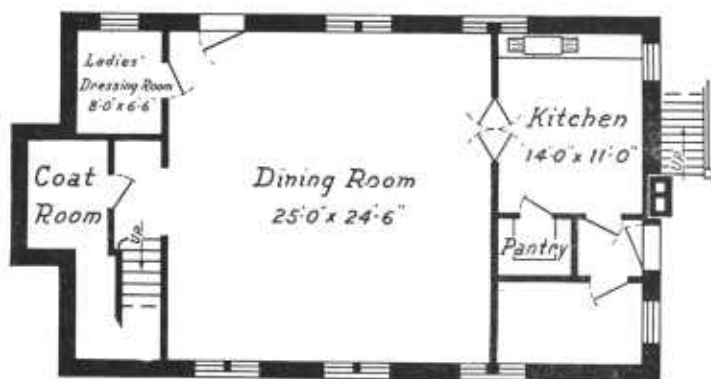


FIG. 7.—Basement plan of community house at Gilead.

CHURCH-CONTROL FEATURE.



FIG. 8.—Community house at Honey Creek, Wis.

A community house with church control in a village surrounded by a large farming community, erected in 1912 at a cost of \$7,000 and financed by voluntary contributions. While financed and used by the entire community, the building was placed under the control of the church so that the church business organization could be used for purposes of management and permanent control.

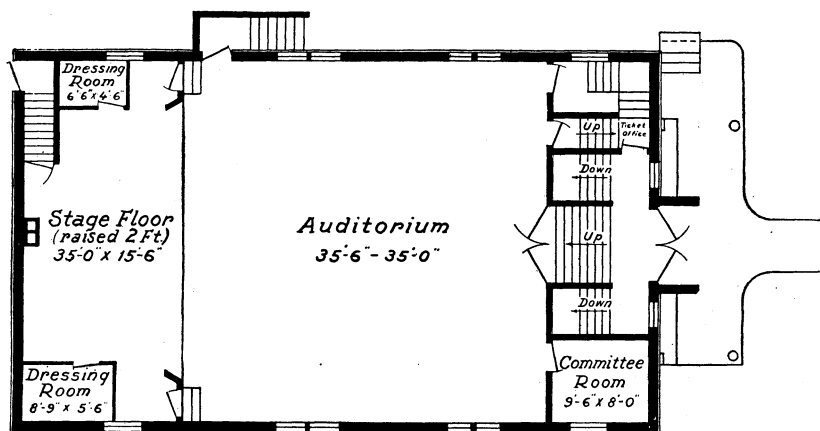


FIG. 9.—First floor plan of community house at Honey Creek, Wis. (By courtesy of H. B. Miller, architect.)

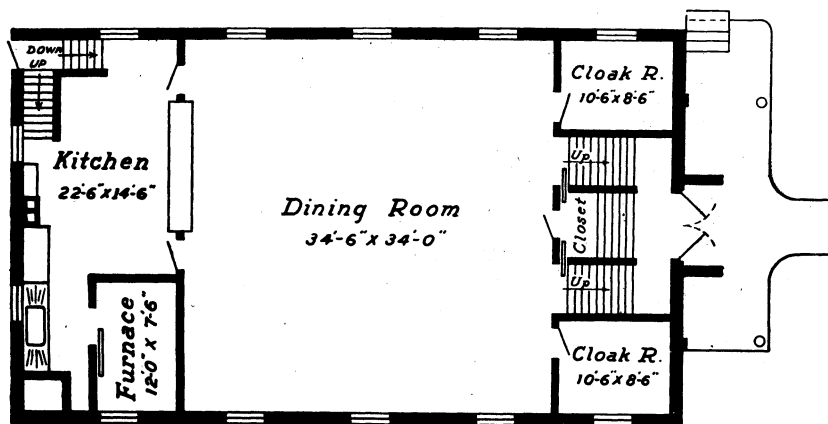


FIG. 10.—Basement plan of Honey Creek building.

FARMING AND VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

LIBRARY FEATURE.

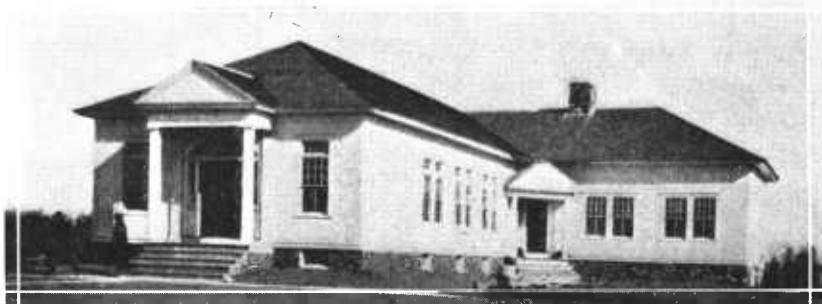


FIG. 11.—Community house at Bolton, Conn.

Erected in 1913 by Hall and Library Association, in a village of 500 population, through general contributions of money, labor, and materials. Valued then at \$9,000. Colonial design, stone fireplace. Village supports the library.

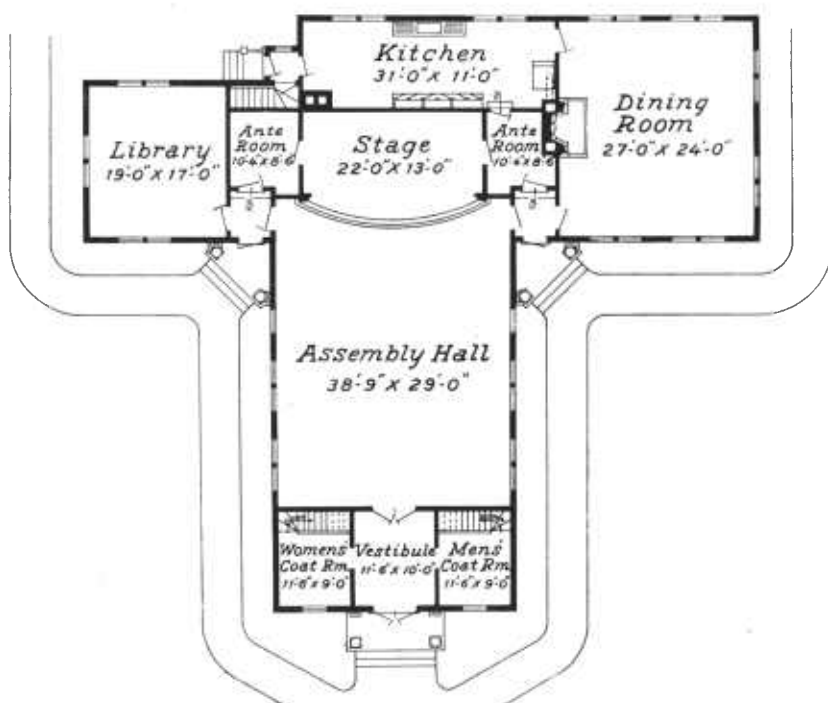


FIG. 12.—Plan of Bolton building. (By courtesy of Whiton and McMahon, architects.)

STOCK-SHOW FEATURE.



FIG. 13.—Community building at Argonia, Kans.

A township building erected in 1916 at a cost of \$4,509 in a town of 500 inhabitants as the result of a bond vote made possible by special legislative enactment. Object was to unite town and country interests. A special feature is a cement strip 15 feet wide, extending between the side doors and in front of the auditorium, on which stock are brought to be judged.

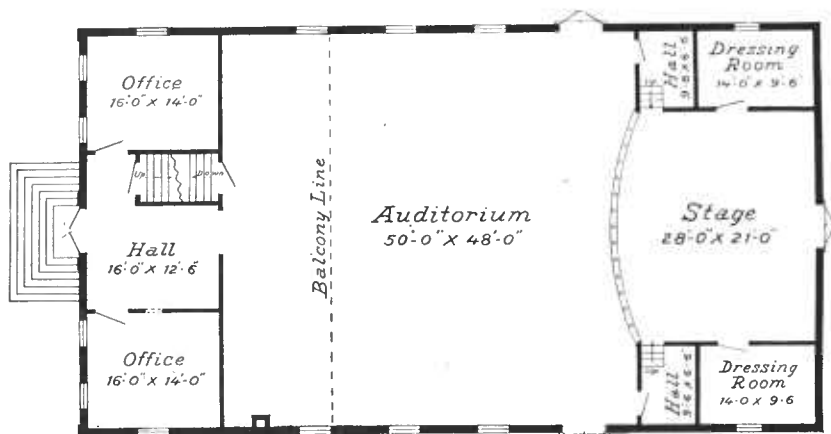


FIG. 14.—Main floor plan of Argonia building.

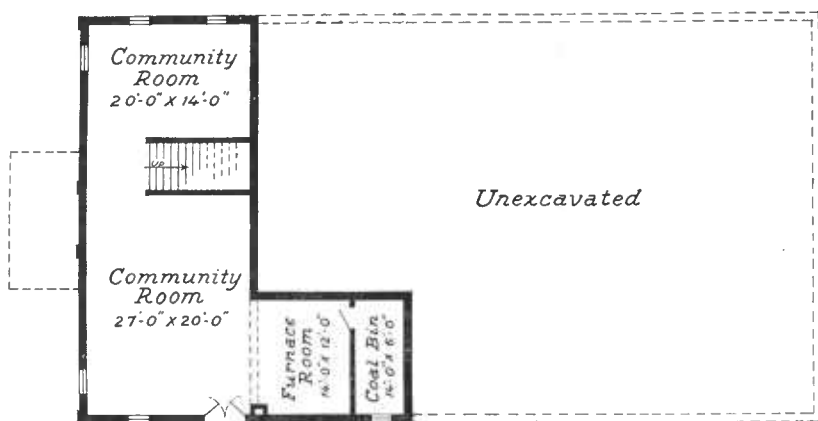


FIG. 15.—Basement plan of Argonia building.

LIBRARY AND BOWLING FEATURES.



FIG. 16.—Community building at Wilder, Vt.

Erected in 1899 in a village of 300 population at a cost of \$12,000 and financed by individual donation. A well-planned building, with library, bowling alleys, swimming pool, and recreation features.

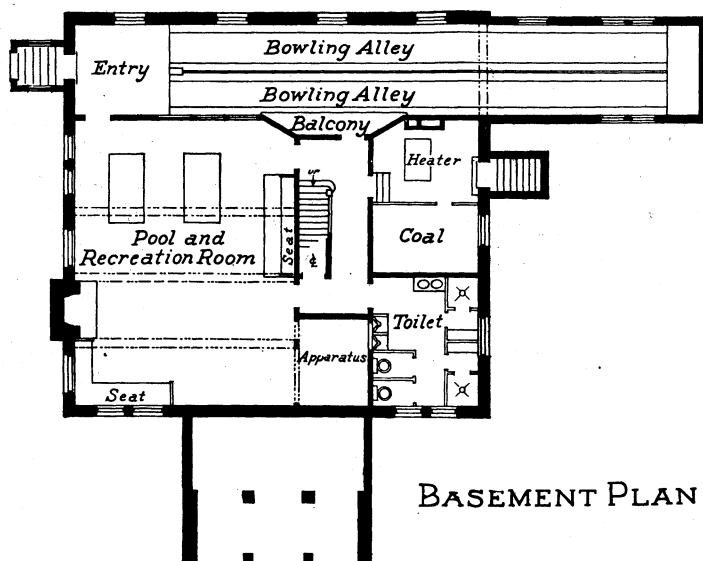
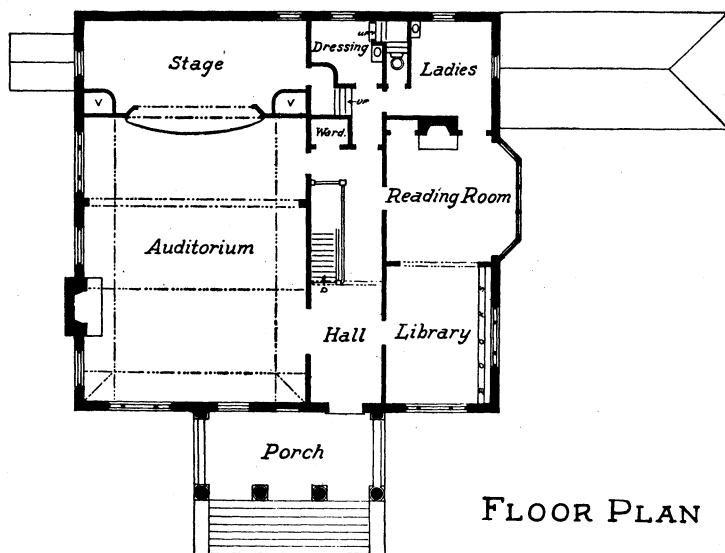


FIG. 17.—Plans of Wilder building. (By courtesy of Lewis S. Newton, architect.)

LIBRARY FEATURE.



FIG. 18.—Community building at Kenilworth, Ill.

An excellent suburban type, well designed, beautifully located, and with improved surroundings. Erected in 1907 in a town of 900 population at a cost of \$31,000, through the voluntary contributions of 180 people. A free circulating library is maintained for the use of all the villagers. Other features are the accordion folding doors, by means of which the floor can be separated into three distinct units or thrown into one large room, as occasion requires.

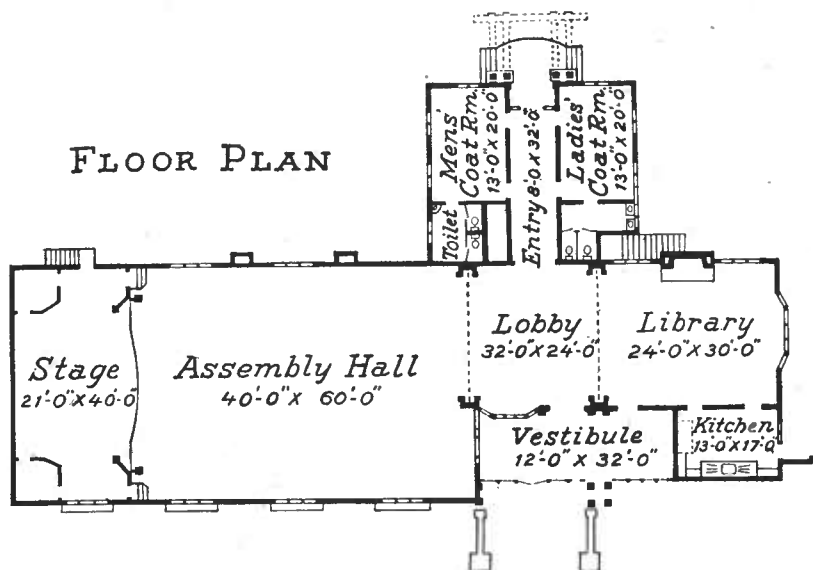


FIG. 19.—Plan of Kenilworth building. (By courtesy of Geo. W. Maher, architect.)

WAR MEMORIAL FEATURE.

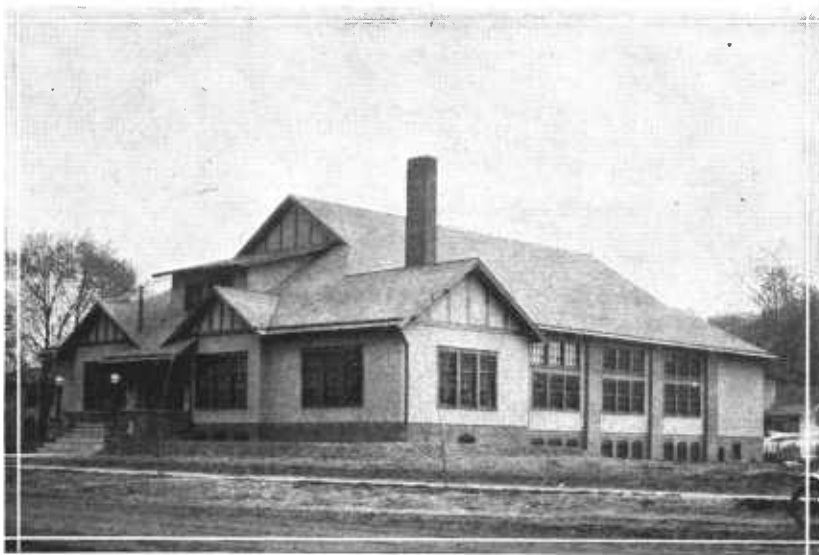


FIG. 20.—Community house at Brimfield, Ill.

Dedicated in 1919 in a village of 700 population as a memorial to the soldiers who served in the World War. A well-planned building, serving a town and country community of 2,000 people. Building unfurnished cost \$26,654, and the plant was financed by the issuance of 600 shares of stock to 265 holders, one-half being farmers, and a loan of \$10,000. A motion-picture machine, part of the equipment, helps maintain the building. Seating capacity of auditorium and balcony is 1,200. Building has a fireplace, two heating plants, electric and ventilating fans, air pressure tank, and electric lights.

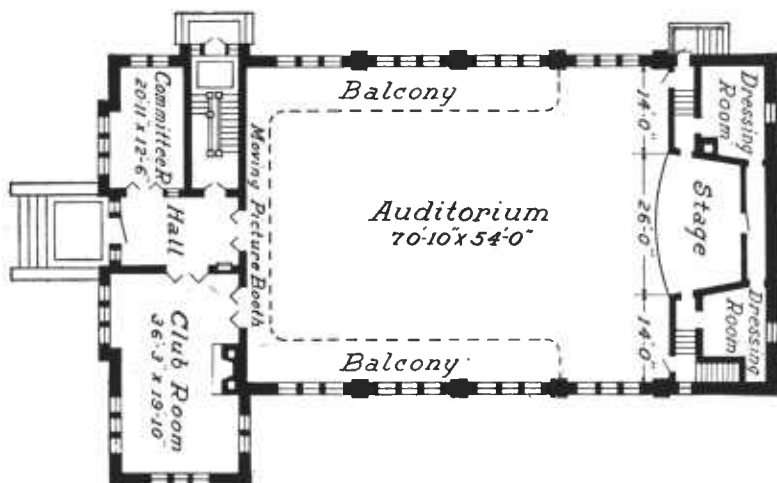


FIG. 21.—Floor plan of Brimfield building. (By courtesy of Robert J. Hotchkiss, architect.)

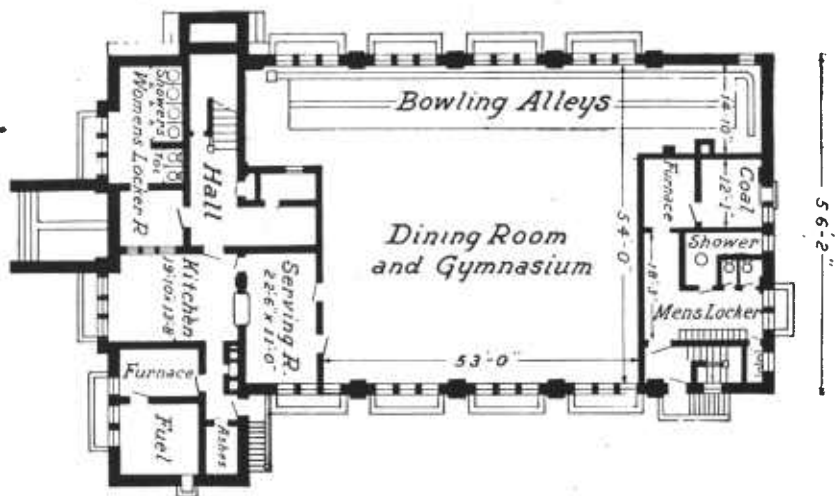


FIG. 22.—Basement plan of Brimfield building.

LIBRARY AND AUDITORIUM FEATURES.

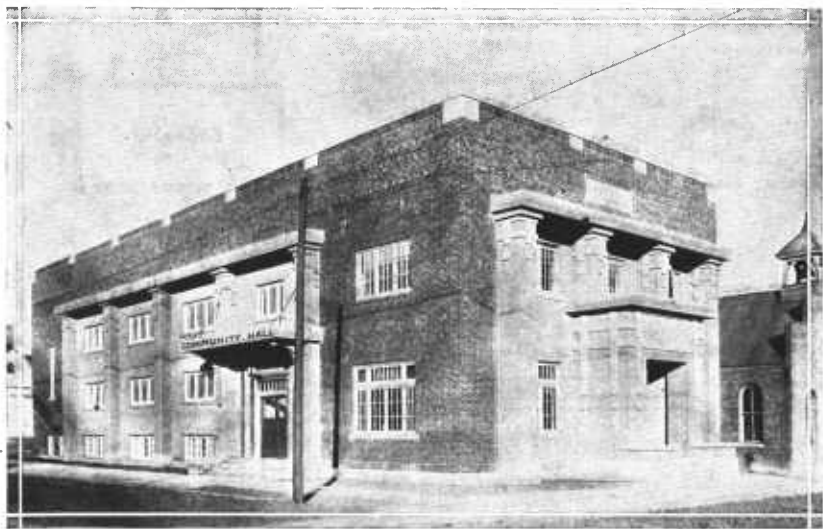
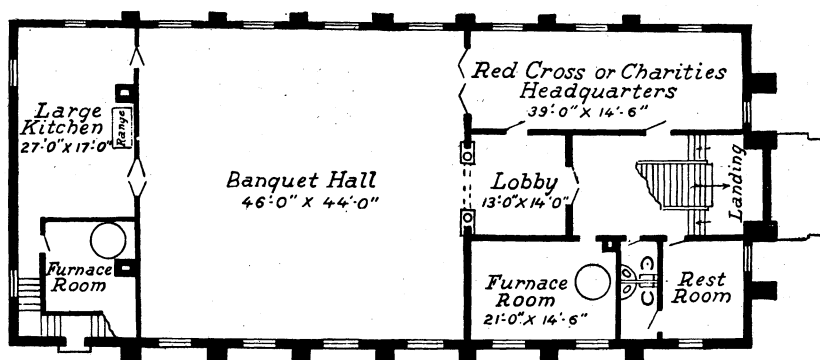
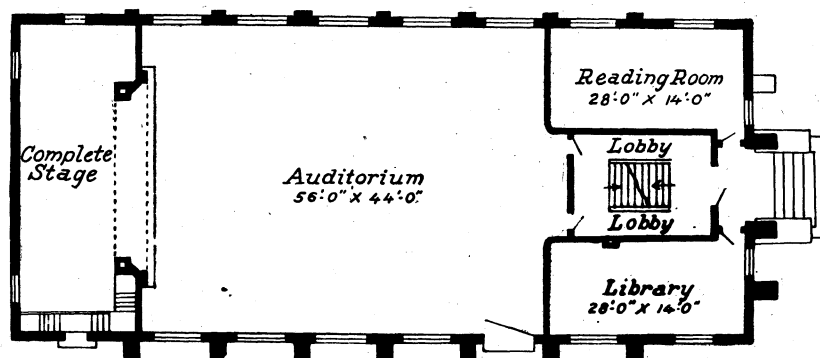


FIG. 23.—Community house at McLean, Ill.

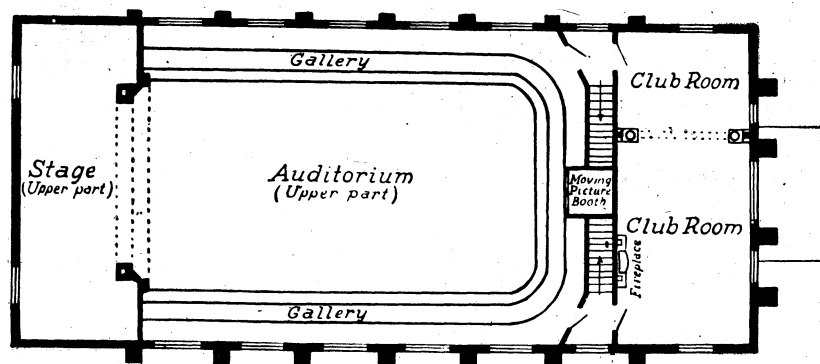
This building was erected in 1912 in a town of 700 population at a cost of \$16,000 by separate hall and library associations through stock issues to 300 people, largely farmers, and a few donations. The library is separate from the hall, though the two are united by a door and have exits to separate streets. The township maintains the library and uses a room in the building for official purposes. There are two fireplaces, two heating plants, and a motion-picture booth.



BASEMENT PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

FIG. 24.—Plans of McLean building. (By courtesy of A. T. Simmons, architect.)

PLAYHOUSE FEATURE.

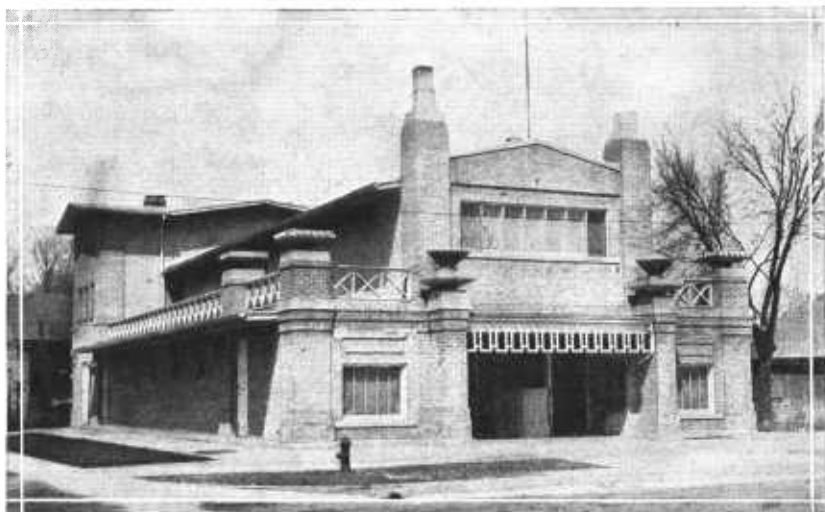


FIG. 25.—Community house at Centerville, Mich.

A community playhouse erected in a village of 600 population in 1916 with the primary purpose of encouraging town and country cooperation. Cost, \$9,330, was financed by stock sales, donations, and a loan. Is equipped with a motion-picture machine. Steel trusses take the place of posts. It has slag roof, concrete floor, and an indirect lighting system. In the rear are two openings, at each side of the stage, temporarily closed, where dressing rooms are to be built later.

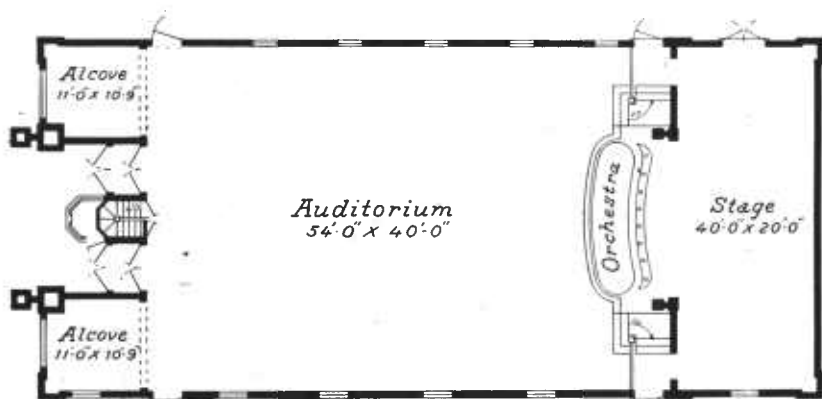


FIG. 26.—Plan of Centerville building. (By courtesy of E. O. Fullis, architect.)

FIRE-DEPARTMENT FEATURE.



FIG. 27.—Community building at Locust Valley, N. Y.

A well-designed suburban building, erected in 1914 near a village of 500 population at a cost of \$27,000, financed by contributions from 90 per cent of the families of the village and surrounding farming people, and the voluntary labor of 110 persons, all the work being done locally. A motion-picture machine has been installed, while a large room is given over to the village fire department.

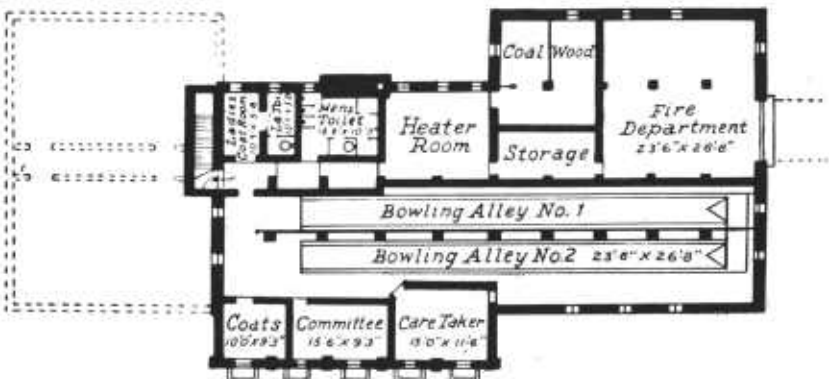


FIG. 28.—Basement plan of Locust Valley building. (By courtesy of Guy Lowell, architect.)

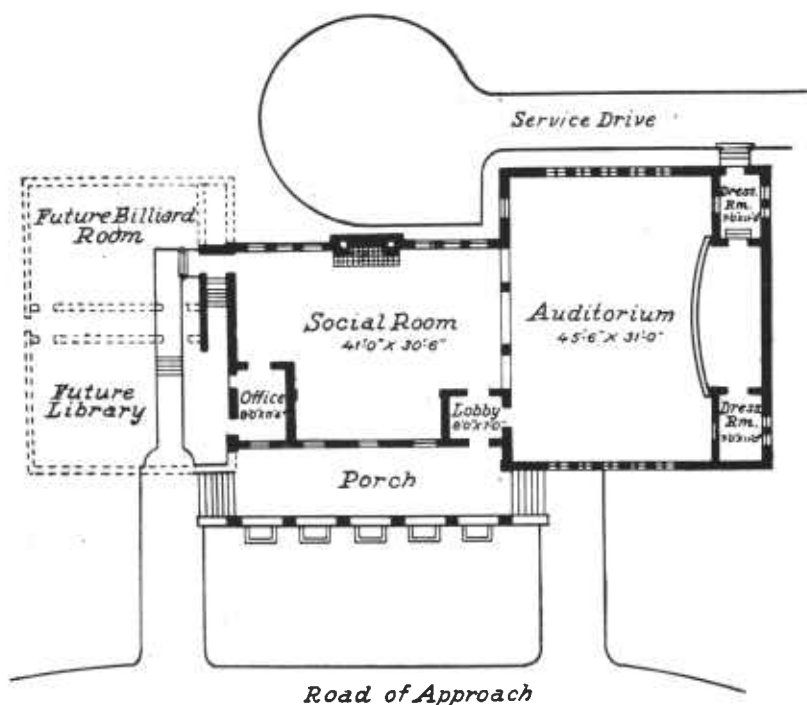


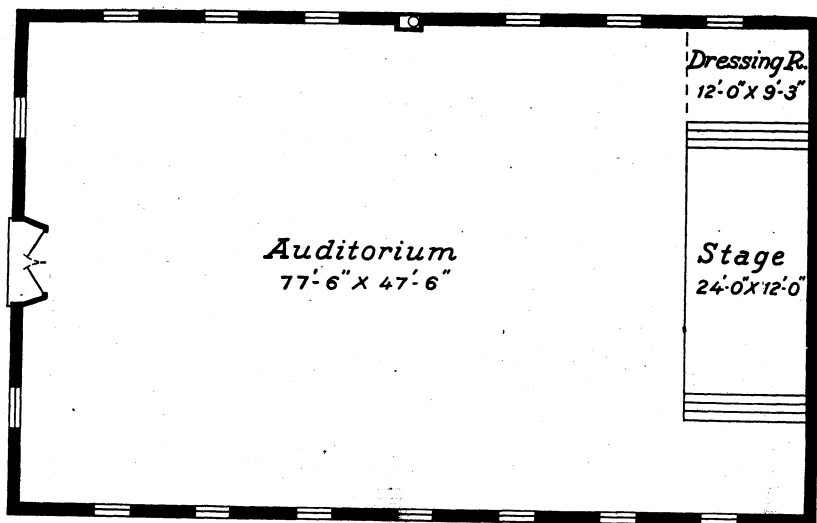
FIG. 29.—Main floor plan, Locust Valley building.

FARMING AND TOWN COMMUNITY.
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION ASSOCIATION FEATURE.

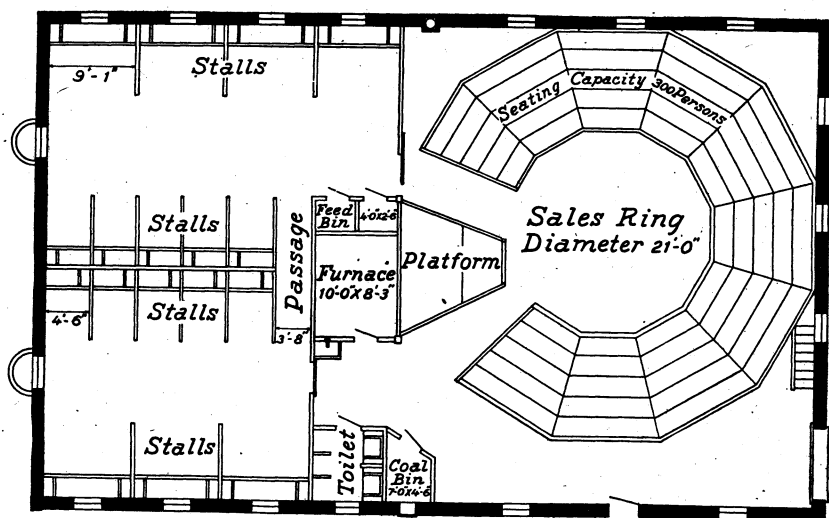


FIG. 30.—Stock show and social center building at Logan, Iowa.

The County Agricultural Extension Association erected this building in 1912, in a town of 1,400 population, as a combined stock show, agricultural exhibit, and social center, at a cost of \$5,700, from stock issued to 200 holders. In the basement, for occasional use, are stalls for 80 animals, 50 wooden "horses" for corn exhibits, a sales ring with rising tiers of seats sufficient for 300 people, and a judges' platform. Above is the auditorium and stage.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN

FIG. 31.—Plans of Logan building. (By courtesy of F. W. Lanpher, architect.)

STOCK SHOW AND FALL FESTIVAL FEATURE.

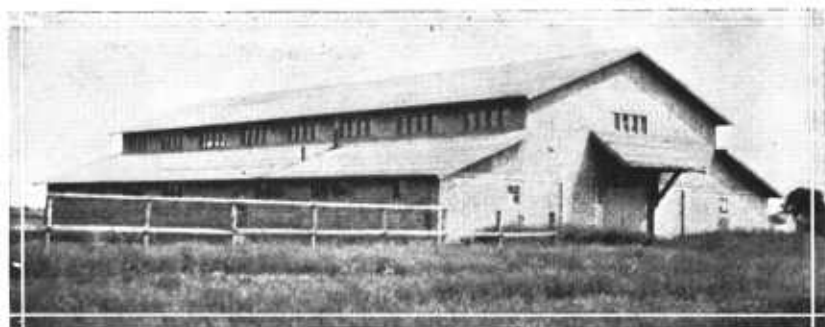


FIG. 32.—Stock show building at Stuart, Iowa.

Erected in 1914 in a town of 1,800 population by Stock Show Association (Inc.), to be used for stock sales, fall festivals, athletic contests, and to house conventions and large assemblies. It cost \$5,000 and was financed by voluntary contributions. The central hard-pine floor, 72 by 48 feet, together with stage, is surrounded by a cindered space with removable bleacher seats.

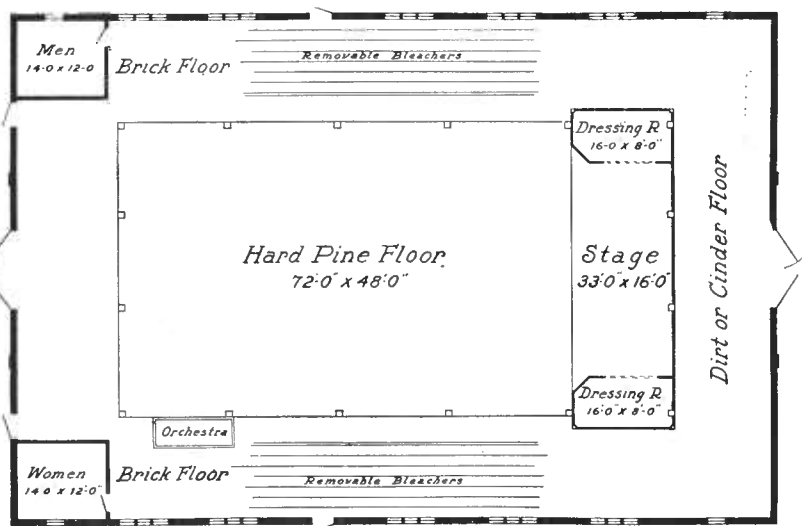


FIG. 33.—Plan of Stuart building. (By courtesy of DeJarnette & Carver, architects.)

GRANGE-HALL FEATURE.



FIG. 34.—Grange Hall at Newbury, Mass.

Primarily for grange purposes, this building serves also as the community center of a town of 1,500 population and the surrounding farming community. It was erected in 1913 at a cost of \$6,500, raised by the 350 members of the local grange from entertainments, sales, auctions, fairs, voluntary labor, and money contributions. Receipts from the bowling alleys and the refreshments stand help maintain the building.

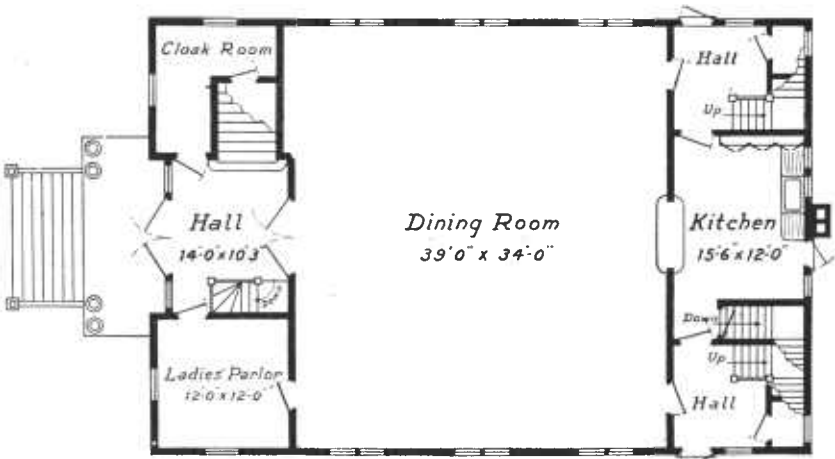


FIG. 35.—First floor plan of Newbury building. (By courtesy of I. S. Hann, architect.)

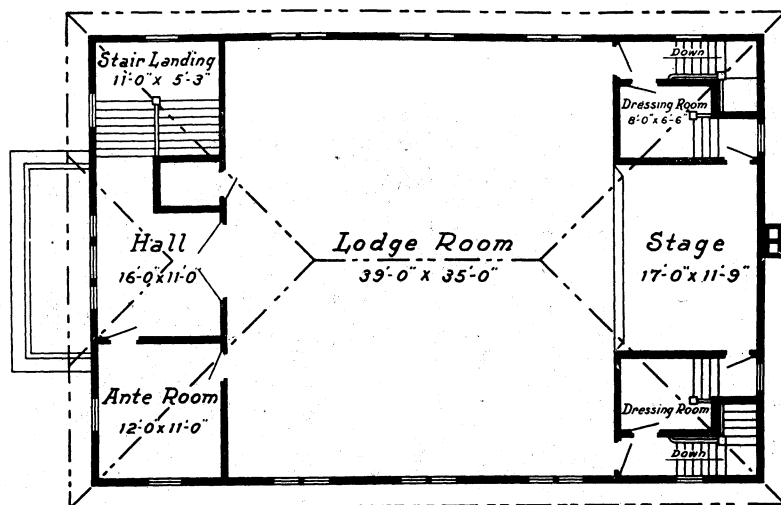


FIG. 36.—Second floor plan of Newbury building.

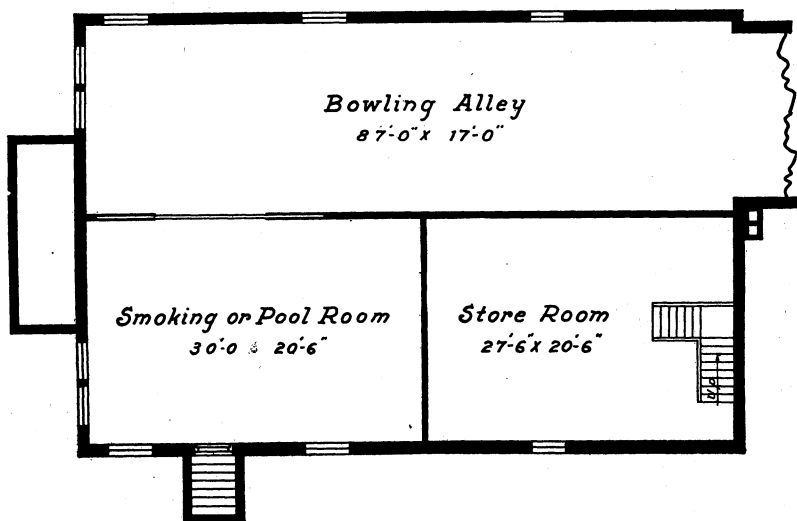


FIG. 37.—Basement plan of Newbury building.

SCHOOL FEATURE.



FIG. 38.—Community house at Wheaton, Minn.

A building controlled by the school district and connected with the consolidated high school. Erected in 1916 in a town of 1,300 population at a cost of \$26,000, to serve the town and surrounding farming community. Financed by means of bond sales, entertainments, general contributions, etc. It houses the industrial department of the high school, the county farm bureau, annual agricultural exhibit, a community theater, a ladies' rest room, and a library.

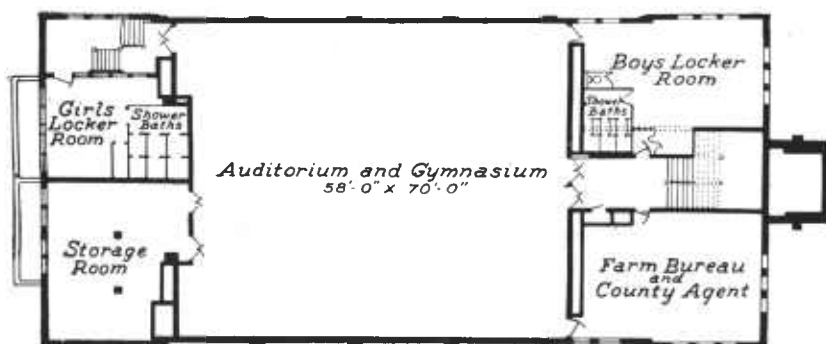


FIG. 39.—First floor plan, Wheaton building.

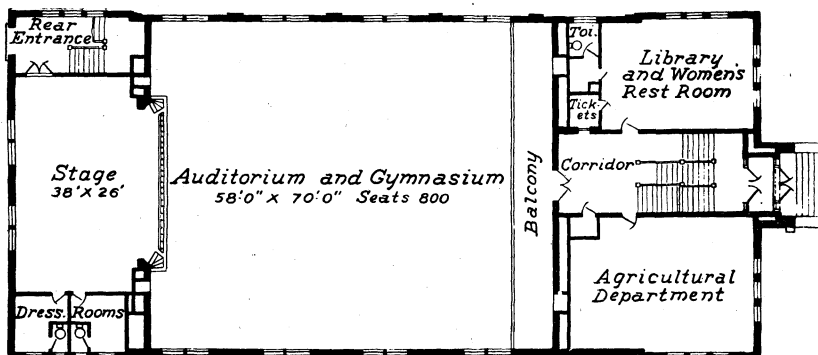


FIG. 40.—Second floor plan, Wheaton building.

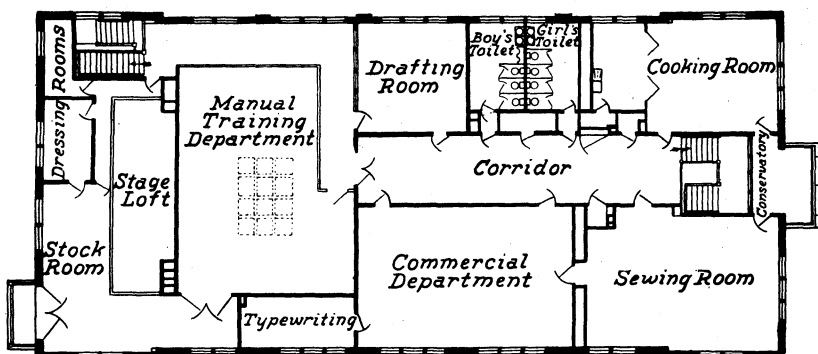


FIG. 41.—Third floor plan, Wheaton building.

SWIMMING POOL AND RUNNING TRACK FEATURES.

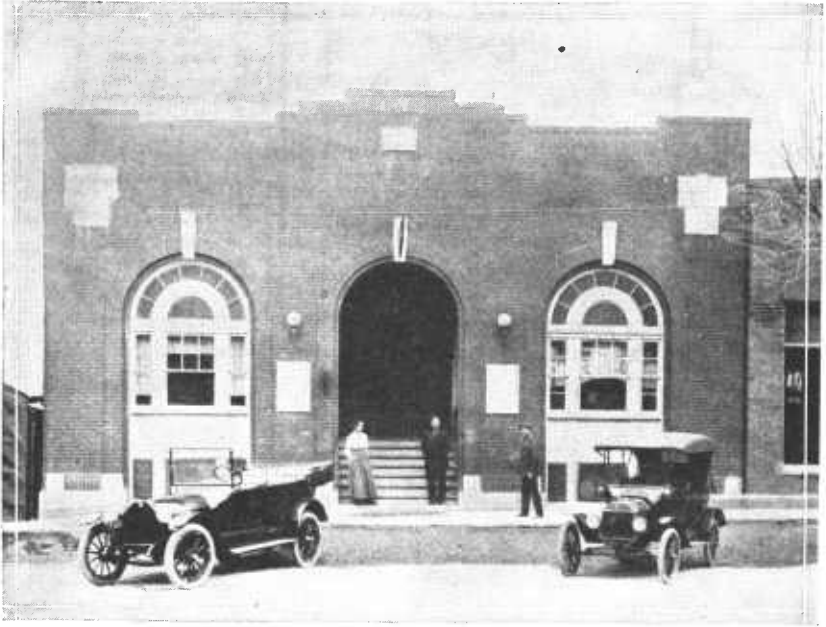
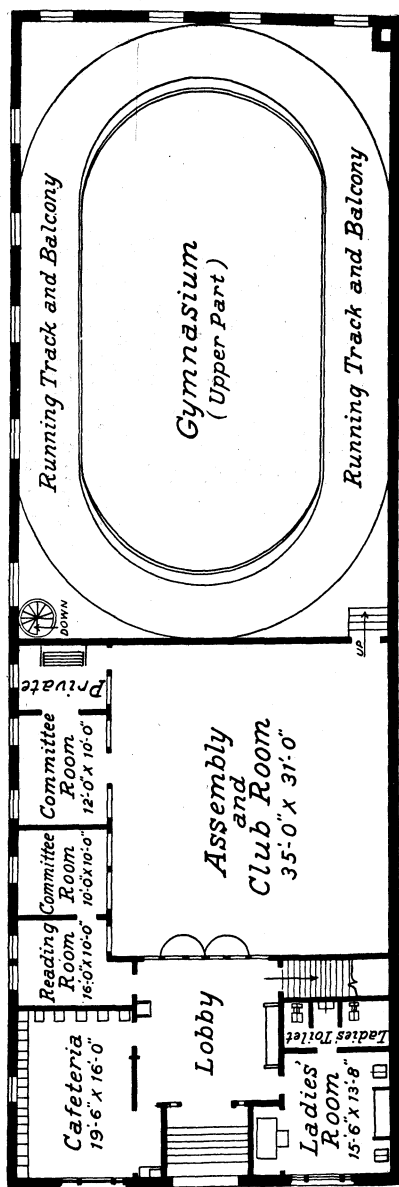
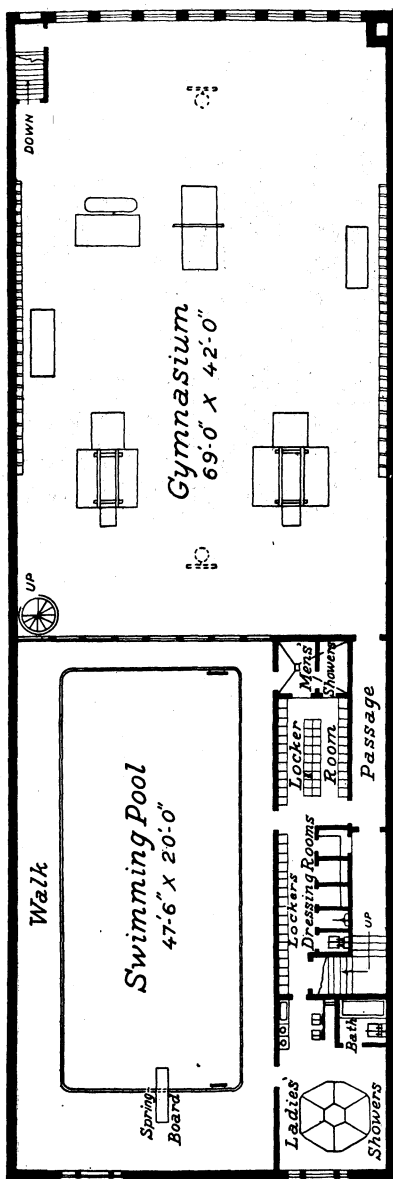


FIG. 42.—Gymnasium and social center building at Marysville, Kans.

A donated building erected in 1912 at a cost of \$14,000 in a town of 2,300 population surrounded by a large farming community. The water in the swimming pool is heated by circulation through a tubular boiler. The running track is used also as a gallery for spectators of roller skating or the basket-ball games. Such a race track adds greatly to the cost of building.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN

FIG. 43.—Plans of Marysville building. (By courtesy of Boillot & Lauck, architects.)

CHURCH-CONTROL FEATURE.

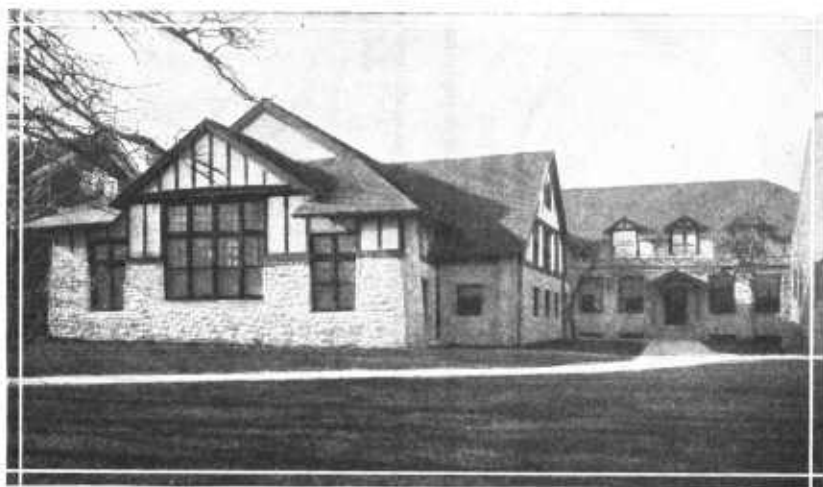


FIG. 44.—Community house at Winnetka, Ill.

A well-planned building for club and organization use in a suburban town of 3,000 inhabitants. While the title rests with a church, it was financed by general contribution, is managed by a nondenominational board of trustees, and is used by the whole community. It was completed in 1911 at a cost of \$36,000. The number of club rooms of various sizes serves to give an idea of the number of organizations which use the building. The gymnasium is used as an auditorium, while the kindergarten room is used as a small assembly room. The kitchen serves both halls with almost equal facility. Women from the country find the neighborhood room of great convenience, while the various club rooms are available for the use of agricultural organizations.

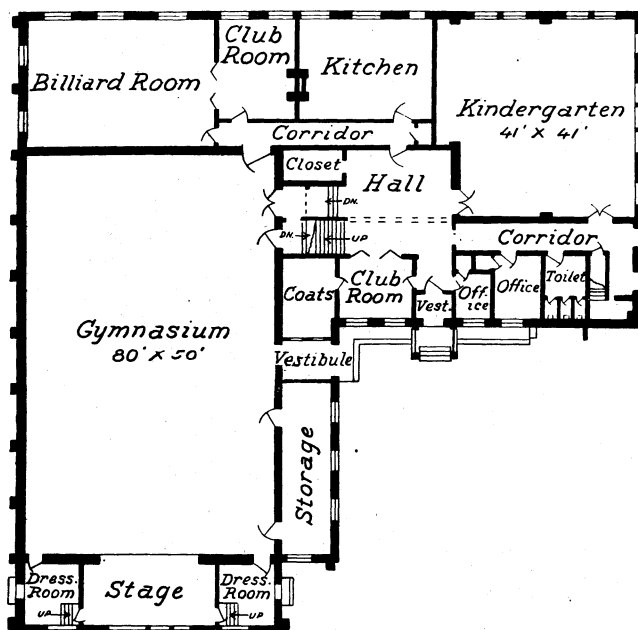


FIG. 45.—First-floor plan, Winnetka building. (By courtesy of A. S. Coffin, architect.)

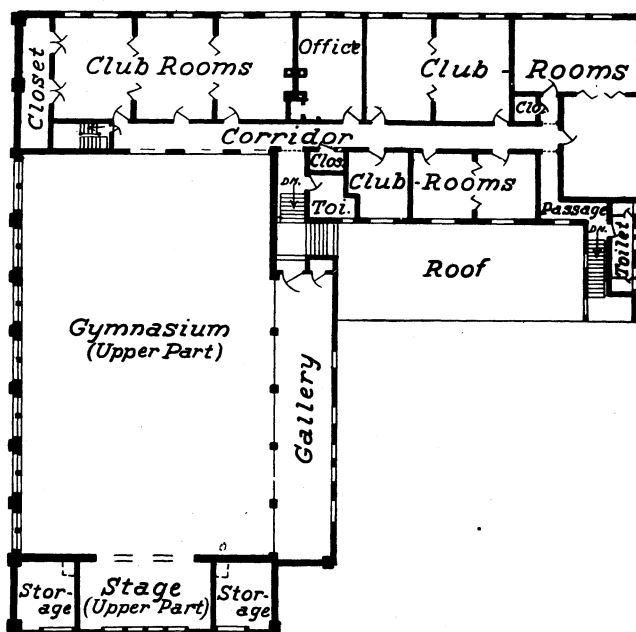


FIG. 46.—Second-floor plan, Winnetka building.

MUNICIPAL FEATURES.

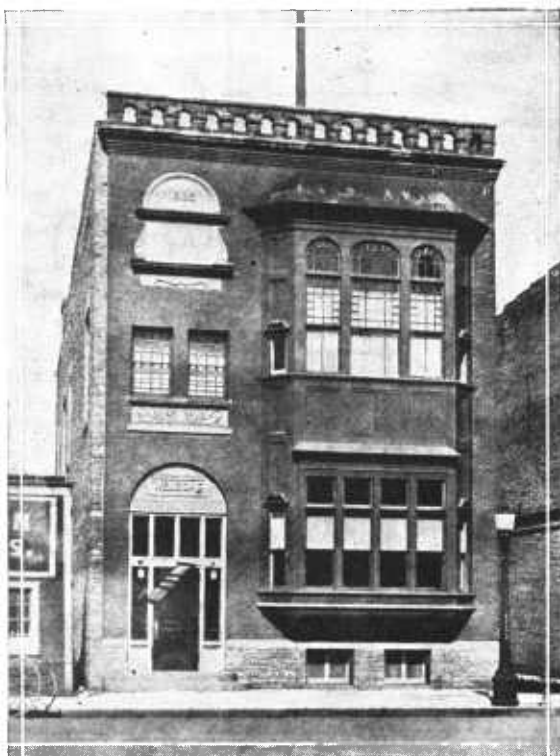
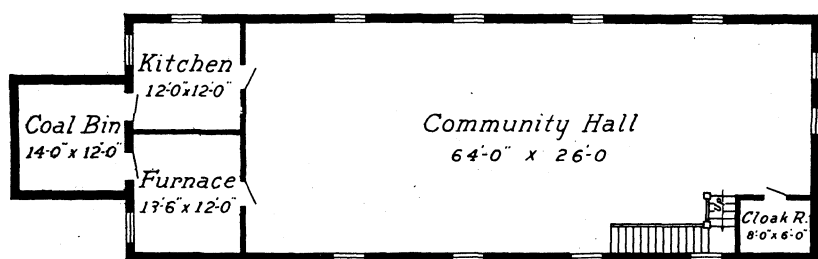
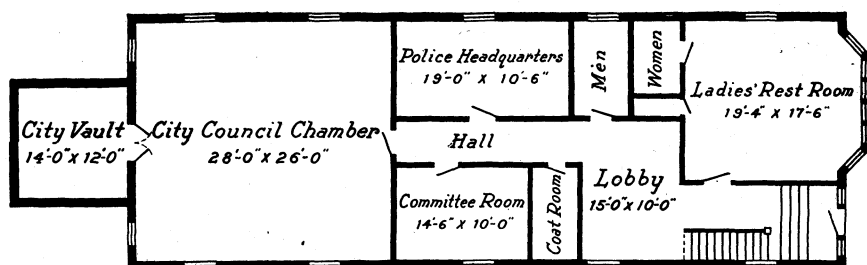


FIG. 47.—Community building at Northfield, Minn.

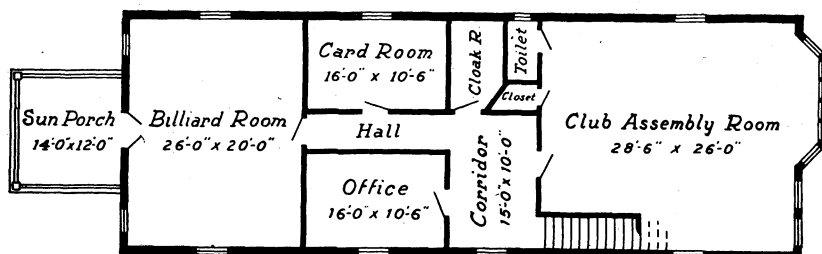
The community club, a combination of the old commercial club and civic club, sponsored this building as the center of a new movement in the direction of town and country cooperation. A building was purchased and reconstructed in 1918 at a cost of \$26,000, financed by (1) general contributions of the 300 members, one-third of them farmers, (2) a moderate donation, (3) a contribution by the municipality by virtue of which it has the use of one floor, and (4) receipts from carnivals, socials, minstrel shows, and sales given under the auspices of the women's community council. The ladies' rest room is a convenience to country women, while the assembly hall and kitchen are useful to the 15 farmers' clubs in the near-by rural section. Northfield has a population of 3,200.



BASEMENT PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

FIG. 48.—Plans of Northfield building.

FARMING AND SMALL CITY.
FARMERS' REST ROOM FEATURE.

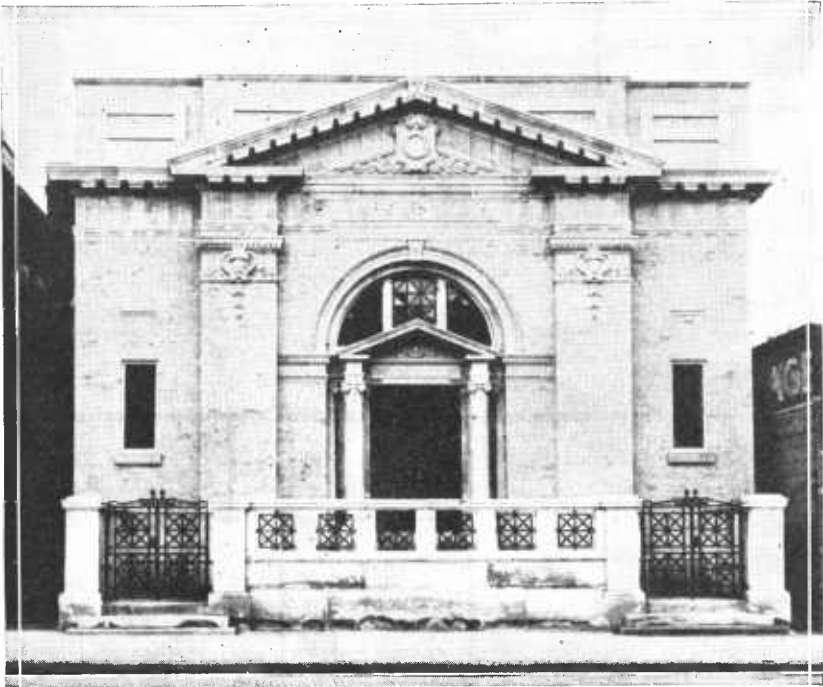


FIG. 49.—Farmers' clubhouse at Seymour, Ind.

A donated clubhouse for the exclusive use of residents of the farming community, erected in 1914 in a small city of 6,000 population. Maintenance in perpetuity is provided for through an endowment. Membership in the Farmers' Club (Inc.), of which there are more than 1,000 families, is secured by filling out application cards. The building is architecturally pleasing, as the dignified lines of the picture indicate, is finely furnished, and as nearly fireproof as possible.

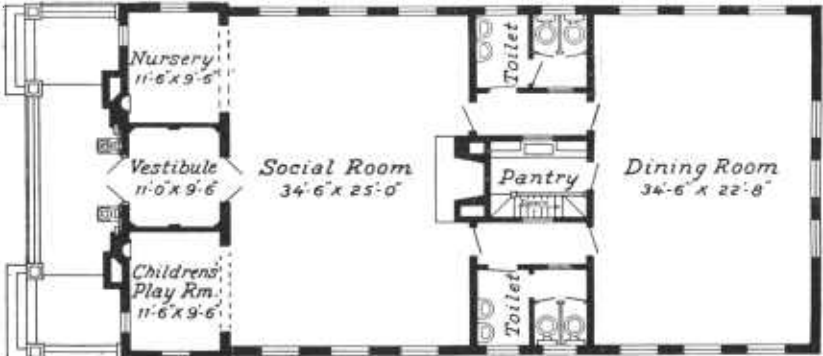


FIG. 50.—Floor plan of Seymour building. (By courtesy of John Bacon Hutchins & Sons, architects.)

RECREATION FEATURE.



FIG. 51.—Community building at Lebanon, N. H.

A donated community building of excellent design and complete as to detail, located in a small city of 5,000 population. Erected in 1917, at a cost of \$42,000, for the benefit of the people of the town and surrounding farming community. Nearly every feature of community life can find expression in this building. Out-swinging doors, spacious halls, and wide, gradually sloping stairways facilitate quick movement of people. The assembly room, though on the second floor, is provided with adequate exits. Every room possesses a fireplace and is well furnished, while the building possesses up-to-date lighting, heating, and plumbing facilities.

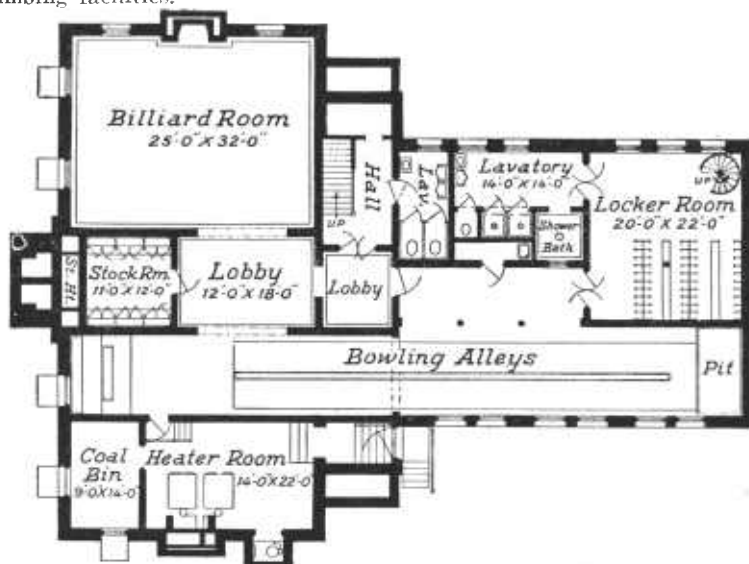


FIG. 52.—Basement plan, Lebanon building. (By courtesy of C. W. Bixby, architect.)

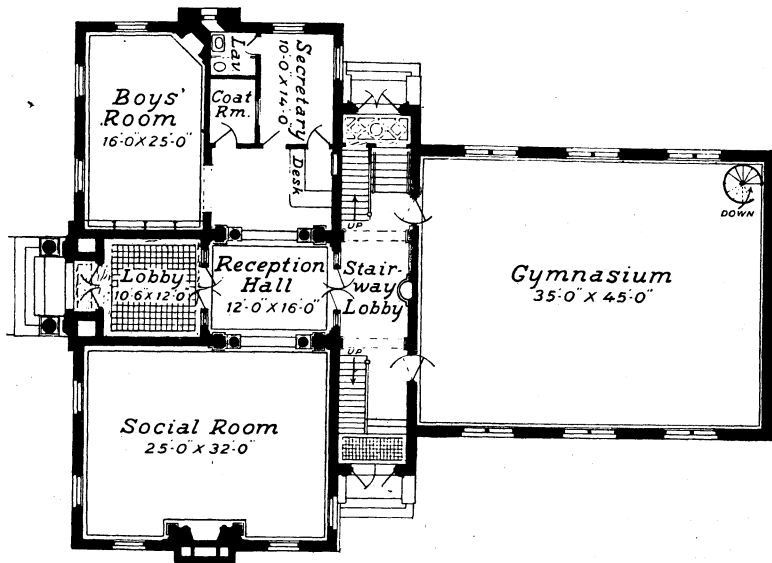


FIG. 53.—First floor plan, Lebanon building.

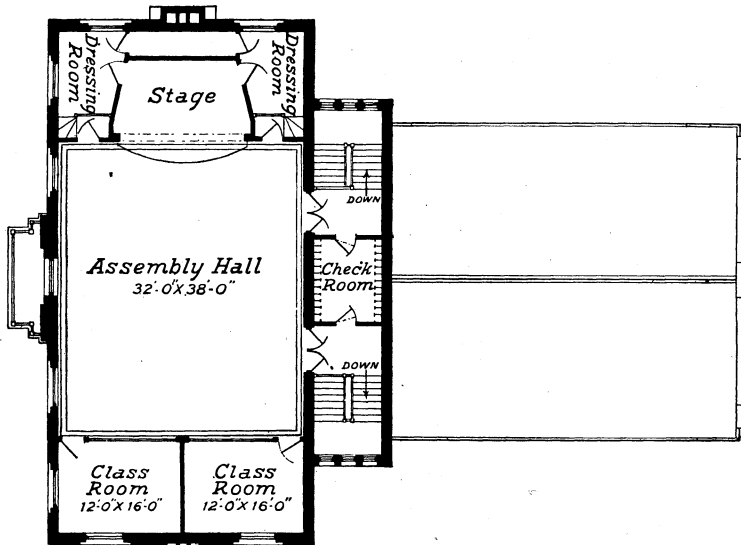


FIG. 54.—Second floor plan, Lebanon building.

